

To: Smith, Mark A.[Smith.Marka@epa.gov]; Werner, Leslye[Werner.Leslye@epa.gov]
From: Bertram, Gary
Sent: Mon 5/18/2015 1:35:53 PM
Subject: RE: Our favorite landfill

Daily News

Advocates Push For EPA-Backed Relocations At Missouri Superfund Site

Posted: May 15, 2015

Local and national community advocates are stepping up pressure on EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy to respond to alleged health threats from a Superfund site in Missouri, asking the administrator to relocate residents in up to 500 homes around a landfill that has long emitted toxins due to an underground fire that is migrating toward radioactive wastes.

The groups are also calling on Microsoft founder Bill Gates, whose investments include the company that owns the landfill, to use his dominant shareholder status in Republic Services to persuade the company to pay for relocations. Republic Services, a nationwide trash collection and disposal company, owns the landfill.

At issue is the West Lake Landfill site in Bridgeton, MO, which consists of two adjacent landfills -- one which contains radioactive waste from the Manhattan Project, and a second solid waste landfill where an underground fire has been burning over the past four years, according to activists. Nuclear waste was illegally dumped during the Cold War at the first landfill. And the underground fire in the solid waste landfill has been migrating toward the nuclear wastes.

Residents have long sought greater action from EPA, particularly pursuing headquarters interest, but the agency has often deferred to its Region 7 office.

Residents now appear to be stepping up their attempts to turn EPA headquarters attention to the matter. Despite backing from their congressional delegation to secure a meeting with McCarthy, the groups said May 7 she declined.

"Unfortunately, the administrator has refused to meet with the local leaders, even after receiving a bipartisan letter requesting such a meeting from Sens. Roy Blunt [R-MO], Claire McCaskill [D-MO], and Reps. Lacy Clay [D-MO] and Ann Wagner [R-MO]," Lois Gibbs, executive director of the Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ), said at a May 7 press conference in Washington, D.C.

"In order for you to more fully understand the on-the-ground implications of this site, we

would appreciate it if you could meet with these constituents so that they can personally share their insights with you and EPA Headquarters," the lawmakers wrote April 17 to McCarthy.

CHEJ and the local group Just Moms St. Louis nonetheless met with McCaskill and Blunt May 6 and 7. The groups also May 7 marched to EPA's headquarters office to deliver a letter to McCarthy on the issue and then delivered a petition to the Gates Foundation with over 1,500 signatures asking Gates to use his power as a key shareholder in Republic Services to purchase the homes of those living within two miles of the landfill.

Superfund Authority

The groups say EPA has the authority under the Superfund law to relocate families away from the site. "The state of Missouri found that the community has a childhood cancer cluster, a high number of rare appendix cancers, and many other diseases which local families believe are directly related to the fire and radioactive wastes," CHEJ says in a May 7 press release.

"The state of Missouri admitted that the fire will never be put out and it will be more than two years before the first shovel of dirt is moved to build a barrier wall between the fire and radioactive waste," Gibbs said in the press release. "This is unacceptable . . . McCarthy must use her authority to protect innocent American families."

The groups are asking for a buyout of homes within a two-mile radius surrounding the site, which they say number between 200 and 500 homes.

The groups also unexpectedly met with EPA Region 7 Acting Regional Administrator Mark Hague during their May 7 meeting with McCaskill as the senator already had a meeting scheduled with Hague, and instead told him to take that time to meet with the residents, the groups said at the press conference.

They said that Hague's response to their demands was that the agency would "act under the law."

The petition to Gates urges him to use his dominant shareholder status with Republic Services to convince the company to evacuate families living near the landfill. It says "Gates owns 27 percent of the company's share through his investment company, Cascade Investment." In addition, a chief investment officer at Cascade is Michael Larson, who sits on Republic's board of directors, the petition says.

Spokespeople for EPA and the Gates Foundation did not respond by press time to questions on the issue.

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From: Smith, Mark A.
Sent: Monday, May 18, 2015 8:34 AM
To: Werner, Leslye
Cc: Bertram, Gary
Subject: Re: Our favorite landfill

Thanks. Can one of you cut and paste the article? Can't access outside the network.

On May 18, 2015, at 8:05 AM, Werner, Leslye <Werner.Leslye@epa.gov> wrote:

<image001.gif>

<http://insideepa.com/daily-news/advocates-push-epa-backed-relocations-missouri-superfund-site>

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